1:Huntingford E-4, 5 (1938-1939) 1953 FLA Dorobo FLA



585 237 591 that cow-dung be used for both the *kondo* and *kwenet*, and if there are no cattle in the bridegroom's settlement it must be procured from somewhere else. Marriage is patrilocal.

*Marriage with Nandi*

583 582 598 Eighteen marriages were recorded in genealogies between Dorobo and Nandi or members of the Nandi group:

| | |
|---|---|
| Dorobo and Nandi women: 6 | Dorobo and Nandi men: 10 |
| Dorobo and Keyo women: 1 | Dorobo and Keyo men: 1 |
| Dorobo and Turik women: 1 | |

Marriage of Dorobo women to outsiders seems to be due to the poverty of the Dorobo, which in these cases would have meant that the women would have remained unmarried; such marriages also mean the accession of stock to the Dorobo.

*Polygyny*

595 587 Although there is no objection to polygyny, Dorobo seldom have the means of acquiring more than one wife at a time, though several cases occurred of re-marriage after a wife's death or desertion. In one genealogy a woman had no less than four successive husbands, none of them her husband's brother, and her only issue was one daughter.

*Re-marriage of Widows*

587 Unlike the Nandi, the Dorobo recognize the re-marriage of widows in the normal manner on payment of bridewealth to their fathers, brothers, or other representatives; it is, however, unusual. Widows normally live with their husband's brothers, return to their parents, or else live alone.

*Divorce*

586 Divorce is rare, and is of one kind only—permanent. The husband can claim the return of the bridewealth. But a wife who has borne a child cannot be divorced for any cause whatsoever.

*Birth*

843 834 849 Intercourse between husband and wife stops at the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy, and is not resumed till the child is about six months old. Birth takes place in the husband's hut, the husband going to live elsewhere nearby. The wife is attended by a midwife, *agaleyoot*, and her mother is present if possible. She stays in the hut for six or seven days after the birth, and the child's body must be kept covered for several weeks, even the father being allowed to see only its face. 846 The mother must be purified by her husband, who kills a goat (which he must acquire somehow if he has none of his own) and rubs the fat and undigested grass (*siyat*) from the stomach on her face, breasts, and belly. Children are weaned at 862 the age of about a year. Twins are not liked, and the mother's ritual uncleanness 845 caused by their birth must be removed by the killing of a goat which is eaten by 724 the mother and her women friends. The Dorobo say that if a man has set a trap at the time when his wife bears twins, the trap will never again catch an animal.

553 796 803 Children receive their first name, the spirit-name, soon after birth; as among the Nandi, this name is not used, but links the child with a protecting spirit. The second or principal name is given before the child can walk, at the time when it is first given solid food, and is called "porridge name" in imitation of the Nandi custom. Children may also be given nicknames which often refer to some physical peculiarity. After circumcision, boys become *kwap*, men of, eldest sons taking their

4:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1951 FLA Dorobo FLA



who stands in the relation of father's brother to the younger members of the group, as in the diagram of Filo's family above, in which both sets of children have a father's brother living close at hand. In a clan group there might be no father's brother actually in the settlement, but often he would not be far off, for the tendency is to settle in defined groups, and not isolated to the same extent as among the Nandi, where a family may live alone without forming part of a settlement though still a member of the parish. This point is important, for the father's brother plays the same part in a child's life that the mother's brother does among the Nandi.

The family, consisting of father, mother, and children, lives in close contact with one or more families, and sometimes includes the husband's father or mother (I came across no case where both were alive together). These families give the Dorobo child his first experience of human beings. Kinship usages are determined to a certain extent by environment and way of life, for under forest conditions and a hunting economy the father is of necessity away from home a good deal, and young children are much in the society of their mothers and the other women of the settlement. This of course is true of other types of society; but in a pastoral society, such as the Nandi, for instance, the father is not, under compulsion of seeking the day to day food supply, obliged to go away from the homestead if he feels disinclined; and there is no doubt that a Dorobo child of tender years saw much less of his father than a Nandi child. When food must be got as it is needed, and when it is scanty or difficult to store, the father, on whom falls the duty of getting it, must be away much more than the man whose cows are close at hand, or whose cultivation produces a crop which he can store.

Till a child is weaned, which may be at the age of twelve months or thereabouts, it is in closer contact with its mother than anybody else, and the father leaves it more or less alone. When the mother has to go out to do her share of food-getting, the child is left at home in charge of its elder sister if it has one, or with its father's mother; failing these, some woman or girl of the settlement will look after it. A Dorobo mother cannot take her baby with her when searching for vegetable food in the forest, for it cannot conveniently be carried on the back in such surroundings; nor can she, like the agriculturalist, lay it down under a tree while she works, because it would not be safe to do so in the forest. This habit persists to-day, and even when a woman goes to work in her *shamba* * the baby is left behind in somebody's care. But a woman's food-questing is done much more quickly than a man's hunting, and she is soon back at home; the *shamba*, too, is not so far away that she cannot get back to the child quickly if need be.

The attitude of a man to his wife is profoundly affected by physical and environmental conditions. The shortage of women and the difficulties of getting a wife (especially when cattle are becoming the medium of bride-

* The Swahili word *shamba* — cultivated land, field, farm, is current throughout Kenya. Since it is a shorter and simpler word than the English equivalent, I shall use it in the sense of a plot of cultivated land.

4:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1951 FLA Dorobo FLA



arap Ruto. There were also two old women, Cesikirikat mother of Arap Kising, and Cepkatet mother of Cemondii. With these lived Cemondii's young sister Cepkoior, aged about 15, who helped her brother's wife to look after the two children, and slept either in her mother's hut, or in the hut of Cesikirikat, eating with her mother or with Cemondii and his wife. The three men Malakwen, Kipsaig, and Kimutai lived together, eating with either of the old women (contributing their share of the food), while Kipungui lived alone, eating with his mother. Cepkoior could marry none of these young men, since they were all her classmen. Such an arrangement seems to be quite usual when a girl has reached puberty but has not yet been circumcised. At Soeiyo a somewhat younger girl named Cepetip lived in a small hut (*sikiwiwat*) with her youngest brother Kimitei (a *fama*). When she went visiting to the neighbouring settlement Ndoretoo she stayed with women there who, when they came to *Soeiyo*, slept in Cepetip's hut, the boy going out to sleep elsewhere.

Where other relatives are concerned, the age-set behaviour patterns tend to replace those of kinship, and even when people are related and within the *fifiat*, they are for practical purposes little more regarded than fellow-classmates. Indeed, in a clan settlement, such people have more influence and effect on their neighbours' children than blood-relatives who live at a distance.

In a primitive people like the Dorobo there is little formality in the educational system, which consists largely of training in obedience, behaviour, and techniques, which are learned from the parents and others with whom the child comes into contact. These contacts are not large owing to the nature of the country and the social system, and thus the relatives with whom a child is seriously concerned are but few. This narrow range of contact must be considered in the light of such important factors as the absence of tracks through the forest, the scattering of relatives, and the abnormal shyness and suspicion of the Dorobo.

Up to the age when a child can be of some help to its parents, both boys and girls are mainly with their mother, who teaches them the business of eating and living in a hut. She corrects childish bad habits and makes them familiar with the ordinary customs and precautions of every day life that have to be observed in Dorobo surroundings. The father corrects improper behaviour towards himself and the mother.

But at the age of *mchakuru*, which comes a little before the onset of puberty, and depends on the child's growth and intelligence, there is a division of duties between the parents. The father begins to teach his son the elements of hunting and trapping, how to make things of wood, how to skin animals, and how to use a bow and arrow, in short, how to behave like a man and do man's work. The mother teaches her daughter how to manage a home, how to look after small children, and how to perform the normal tasks of a Dorobo woman. At this stage both boys and girls are in one respect general servants of the family; they have to herd any stock their father may possess, and make themselves useful about the homestead.

4:Huntingford E-5 (1938-1939) 1951 FLA Dorobo FLA



### 4. Birth

Intercourse stops at the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy, and normally is not resumed till about six months after the birth of the child. When the woman's time has come, she *cuti ka*, "enters the hut", and the husband must then lodge elsewhere, either building himself a rough shelter or living with one of his neighbours in the settlement. During the act of birth the woman is helped by a midwife, *ngoiteyonik*, and her mother is present if possible. She stays for six or seven days in the hut after giving birth, and may then see her husband for the first time since she "entered the hut". The child's body must be kept covered for several weeks after its birth, and only its face may be seen, even by the father. At this stage the mother must be purified by her husband, who kills a goat (which he must buy or steal if he has none of his own), and rubs the fat and undigested grass from its stomach (*siyat*) over her face, breasts, and belly. After about three months the husband may come back to live in his own hut.

The birth of twins is not liked, for they are abnormal, and the old men say, *yaaren amo asanit hamat* ("they are bad because they make the mother unclean"). If the father should have set a trap at the time when twins are born to him, it is believed that that trap will never catch an animal. The ritual uncleanness caused by the birth of twins is removed by the killing of a goat (which the husband must get by any means if he owns none) to be eaten by the mother and her female friends.

A girl who has a child before marriage is called, as among the Nandi, *ceuripocet*, and becomes unclean ritually as a result. She may be purified, however, by the man responsible or one of his male relatives who must kill a he-goat. The meat is eaten by the men and women of the settlement, but not by the girl; and the *siyat* or undigested grass from the stomach is rubbed by one of the women over her face, neck, and breasts, and then washed off. By this means she becomes clean again, unlike such people among the Nandi, who remain unclean all their lives.

A baby is suckled as a rule until the mother is well advanced into her next pregnancy: the standard period was given as "twelve months". If the mother has no milk, or not enough, she goes about begging for milk, *nomuti cako*; but as often as not in such cases the baby dies of starvation. It is weaned by being slapped when it tries to suck, and by the application to the nipples of something bitter, generally a concoction made from the root of a bush called *koshoit* (Nandi, *kotowet*). At this time it is fed with milk from a small gourd, and if no milk can be got, it is given honey instead. It is also given bits of meat cut up small and fed from a spoon made of a piece of gourd; and gruel made from maize or eleusine meal mixed with honey.

If the mother dies in child-birth, her husband's mother or some other female relative takes charge of the baby and feeds it with milk from a small horn: if milk cannot be got, honey and gruel are tried; but very small babies fed in this way seldom live. Sometimes the child may be adopted by a married couple.